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NEW YORK CITY TRIBUNE 8 August 1985 Pg.1

# Soviets have deployed banned mobile ICBM since '78, NSC says

## *SS-16s can be 'available' for crisis*

**'About 50' illegal missiles said to exist**

By Peter Samuel  
Special to the New York City Tribune

WASHINGTON, Aug. 8 — The Soviets reportedly have been deploying a banned mobile intercontinental missile, the SS-16, since 1978, according to the National Security Council (NSC).

"We believe the Soviets have probably been maintaining a number of SS-16 ICBMs at Plesetsk, and that they could be prepared and made available in times of crisis or war for in-garrison firing in from a few hours to a day or so," says a report of NSC's Arms Control Verification Committee.

The report says there are "about 50" of these illegal Soviet nuclear missiles.

"The SS-16 was probably deployed prior to 1981 in violation of SALT II legal obligations and in violation of Soviet political commitments since that time," the report concludes.

Back in 1976, the Soviets created a major alarm in the U.S. intelligence world with flight tests of the SS-16, because it was the world's first mobile intercontinental nuclear missile. During the negotiations for the SALT II agreement, a major American negotiating accomplishment was supposedly the ban on the SS-16. Article IV, Paragraph 8 and its accompanying

Common Understanding, banned the SS-16 and the use of the closely related intermediate range missile, the SS-20, at intercontinental range.

U.S. proponents of SALT II claimed the elimination of the SS-16 threat was an achievement which made worthwhile U.S. concessions — such as allowing the Soviets a monopoly of heavy SS-18 and SS-19 missiles and accepting the Backfire bombers as theater weapons when in fact they can hit the United States with nuclear bombs.

Now, the NSC has confirmed that the Soviets have been covertly developing and deploying the supposedly banned SS-16 missiles all along.

Page 52 of the report shown to the *New York City Tribune* reads:

"Before the SS-16 flight tests were completed in April 1976, the Soviets initiated construction of additional above-ground support facilities for the [SS-16] system at Plesetsk. They made extensive modifications to the existing buildings and constructed new buildings at the four sites at Plesetsk which the United States has historically associated with the SS-16. By mid-1978, such modification and construction had been completed on nearly 50 buildings," apparently able to contain the 50 missiles.

Moreover, it was established by U.S. intelligence that the Soviets, at

the time the buildings were completed, instituted security measures at the site "commensurate with that at operational ICBM sites in the SRF [Strategic Rocket Forces]."

### Major missile-test center

Missile-associated equipment "unique to the SS-16," nuclear war-head storage facilities and giveaway 30-meter communications towers were erected. Plesetsk is also a major missile-test center for the Soviet rocket forces, but, says the report, the barracks buildings and personnel numbers there are consistent only with the presence of the SS-16 mobile missile systems.

Soviet concealment of the SS-16 missile itself has been "more extensive" than with any other strategic program, but a suspect TEL (transporter, erector, launcher vehicle) was seen once (presumably by a U.S. surveillance satellite).

Otherwise, all significant activities are conducted at night, in a cloud or when otherwise difficult to monitor, says the report.

The Soviets now are deploying the new mobile SS-25 at Plesetsk and the NSC committee notes that "none of the facilities needed for the operational use of the SS-16 have been modified for the SS-25." If the SS-16 were inactive as required by SALT II, SS-16 facilities could be used for the new missile.

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